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**GOVERNOR WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW
PAPERS
1865-1869**

(GP 21)

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Governor William Gannaway Brownlow's official papers reflect the unsettled conditions existing in Tennessee during the Reconstruction Period. The reader is quickly struck with the fact that these were indeed difficult times for the state, then caught in the throes of a drastic social, political, and economic change. Radicalism, the papers reveal, was clearly in command of the normal democratic processes of the state government. Resort to military force as flagrant and unveiled, as the Radicals sought to eliminate every vestige of Conservative thought and influence.

An example of Governor Brownlow's strong armed method in dealing with the Conservatives is found in a letter written to the State Legislature on November 22, 1865. In the missive he impresses upon the lawmakers the need for punitive legislation to deal with lawless conditions said to be prevailing in and around Nashville. "I therefore call upon you," he wrote, "by prompt and decisive legislation to remedy this growing and alarming evil. Should you fail to apply the necessary remedy my next appeal will be made to Major General Thomas."

One of the darkest periods in Nashville's history came during the municipal elections in the fall of 1867 when the white electorate was largely disenfranchised and the Radical candidate, A. E. Alden, was overwhelmingly elected under the protection of a Federal force commanded by Brigadier General Joseph A. Cooper. Brownlow's involvement in this situation is revealed in his correspondence to Cooper beginning on September 25, when he wrote that he wanted Cooper to "...enforce the Franchise Law on Saturday next at the municipal election let it cost what it will." Later, On September 29, he commended Cooper for his "...course during the late troubles in Nashville." When Mayor W. Matt Brown refused to vacate his office, Brownlow immediately contacted Cooper to use "...whatever force is Necessary..." in removing the "illegal resistance" to Mayor-Elect Alden.

Much of Governor Brownlow's incoming correspondence also touches upon the problems of the period, with particular emphasis upon the "Negro" franchise which the governor took extra pains to control. John Carey, Commissioner of Registration in Lincoln County, Tennessee, advanced a typical solution for protecting the "colored" vote when he wrote: "the colored men should be protected until well organized and to do this we must have soldiers and that without delay. Send on company immediately, we need them." An interesting exchange of letters between Governor Brownlow and General George H. Thomas, who commanded Federal defenses at Nashville in 1864, tells of a gold medal by the State Legislature for Thomas, slated to return in 1866 on the anniversary of the battle for a "celebration."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Gannaway Brownlow

1805, August 29	Born in Wythe County, Virginia. Parents Joseph A. Brownlow and Catherine (Gannaway) Brownlow, migrated to eastern Tennessee in the early nineteenth century.
1816	Parents die leaving their son to grow up in the care of his mother's relatives.
1826	Entered the Methodist ministry and served for ten years as a circuit rider.
1836, September 11	Married Eliza O'Brien.
1838	Became editor of the <i>Tennessee Whig</i> .
1849	Became editor of the <i>Knoxville Whig</i> .
1861, November 5	Refusing allegiance to the Confederate government, he fled to the mountains on the North Carolina border. His press and types were destroyed.
1861, December 6	Arrested and placed in jail under suspicion of burning railway bridges.
1865	Union Central Committee elected William G. Brownlow governor by acclamation in 1865.
1866	Re-elected governor after most white conservatives had been disenfranchised.
1869, March 4	Before the close of his second term he was elected to the United States Senate.
1877, April 28	Died in Knoxville, Tennessee.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Correspondence—Governor William G. Brownlow, 1865-1869
2. Correspondence—General—Abernathy-Donaldson, 1865
3. Correspondence—General—Edwards-Jordan, 1865
4. Correspondence—General—Lackey-Presson, 1865
5. Correspondence—General—Randolph-Swayne, 1865
6. Correspondence—General—Tarkington-Young, 1865
7. Correspondence—General—Arnell-Kyle, 1866
8. Correspondence—General—Lewin-Young, 1866

Box 2

1. Correspondence—General—Baker-Morris, 1867
2. Correspondence—General—Nunn-Willoughby, 1867
3. Correspondence—General—Dowdy-Young, 1868
4. Correspondence—General—Allen-Smith, 1869
5. Correspondence—General—undated
6. Correspondence—Resignation of R. L. Stanford, State Treasurer, December 24, 1866
7. Correspondence—James M. Ogdon to Gov. Brownlow re: confidential letter on Klu Klux Klan in Tennessee, July 29, 1868
8. Correspondence—John lea to Gov. Brownlow re: lengthy discussion of complete franchise for all citizens of Tennessee, July 26, 1868
9. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1865-1869
10. Correspondence, 1860-1861, relative to the *Knoxville Whig*
11. Letters of Resignation, 1867 (Not on microfilm, added to collection in Sept. 2002)
12. Miscellaneous Material, 1865-1869
13. Miscellaneous Material, 1865-1869

Box 3A

Letter Book No. 1

Box 3B

Letter Book No. 2

Box 4

1. Messages to the legislature, 1865-1868
2. Legislative Committee Reports, 1865-1868
3. Legislative Resolutions, 1865-1866
4. Miscellaneous Papers—Adjutant General's Report
5. Miscellaneous Papers—Report of Edgefield and Kentucky Railroad
6. Proclamations and Election Returns
7. Petitions, 1865-1869
8. Discharge Papers—All-Yar, 1868 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 1)

Box 5

1. Petitions for Pardon—All-Wil, 1867
2. Petitions for Pardon—Aco-Whi, 1868
3. Petitions for Pardon—Ada-Whi, 1869
4. Petitions for Pardon—Ada-Hun, 1866 (On microfilm see Box 6, Folder 1)
5. Petitions for Pardon—Ada-Hun, 1866 (On microfilm see Box 6, Folder 1)
6. Petitions for Pardon—Jak-Wil, 1866 (On microfilm see Box 6, Folder 2)
7. Petitions for Pardon—Jak-Wil, 1866 (On microfilm see Box 6, Folder 2)

Box 6

1. Pardons—Act-Wil, 1865 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 2)
2. Pardons—Bro-Woo, 1866 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 3)
3. Pardons—All-Woo, 1867 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 4)
4. Pardons—Aco-Zac, 1868 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 5)
5. Pardons—Aco-Zac, 1868 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 5)
6. Pardons—Aco-Zac, 1868 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 5)
7. Pardons—All-Wil, 1869 (On microfilm see Box 7, Folder 6)

NAME INDEX

This index contains names of persons holding influential positions during the period. In some instances however, correspondence is included because the content is important enough to warrant attention in the index. The figures in the parentheses immediately following each name denote the total number of letters in the folder from that person. The identification of the writer and the site from where the letters were written are included whenever possible.

Box 1, Folder 7, 1866

Cave Johnson (1) State Senator, Clarksville.

Box 2, Folder 3, 1868

Rutherford B. Hayes (1) Governor of Ohio, Columbus, Ohio.